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**REMARKS**

**Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton,  
Mr. Martin Luther King III, Congressman John Lewis,  
Congressman Spencer Bachus and Mr. Herbie Hancock  
On the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Martin Luther King, Jr.'s Trip to India  
and Black History Month**

**February 12, 2009  
Treaty Room  
Washington, D.C.**

**SECRETARY CLINTON:** Good afternoon. Good afternoon. Well, we are so delighted to have you – please be seated – here in the Treaty Room at the State Department for what is an historic occasion, something that means a great deal to this Department and to our country. I am pleased that His Excellency, Ambassador Sen of India is with us today, and I'm also very honored to be joined by a remarkable group of Americans.

We have standing before you some of the heroes of the Civil Rights Movement and of our recent history. Certainly, Congressman Lewis needs no introduction. We have with us also Congressman Bachus. They will be leading a congressional delegation to India to retrace the steps of Dr. King and Mrs. King. And of course, the person who – for whom this is a personal journey as well as a historic one, Martin Luther King III.

Now Herbie Hancock is going along as well. (Laughter.) And I think there'll be a lot of people who recognize him. And he just told me he's going to be recording, including some Indian artists. And maybe he'll say a word more about that in a minute. Also joining the CODEL will be a number of other distinguished members of Congress, as well as Ambassador Andy Young and former Senator Harris Wofford. This is the real American dream team. And I don't think we could find better ambassadors for our country to send to help mark the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.'s historic trip to India.

As we celebrate Black History Month here at home, the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Dr. King's trip to India is a reminder that the struggle for civil rights and justice has always been and continues to be a global mission; it knows no borders. As Dr. King told us, "Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere."

Now Dr. King was just 30 years old when he traveled to India in 1959, but he had already led the Montgomery bus boycott, and understood the wisdom and power of the nonviolent protest

movement pioneered by the great Mahatma Gandhi. Dr. King toured the country for a month, studying Gandhi's philosophy, meeting with Prime Minister Nehru. He met with other Indian leaders in politics and government, in academia and the professions in business and across the society. And he talked with citizens and young people at every opportunity. He brought the lessons he learned there back to the United States, and renewed his own faith in the unmatched moral force of nonviolent resistance and its ability to achieve meaningful social change.

It's been my great privilege to have heard Dr. King speak when I was a young girl. It was a few years after he had returned from India. It was a cold January night in Chicago, but I was deeply moved then, as I continue to be, by his timeless call to all of us, his dream for a world that is really worthy of our children. I remain inspired by his undying hope for a better tomorrow.

So I am pleased to honor Dr. King's historic journey which really represents the journey that our country has been on. And in many ways, as we have celebrated the inauguration of President Obama, a journey that has brought great faith to people who follow the tenets of nonviolence and Dr. King's philosophy and preaching and who have worked to make the changes here at home that continue to reverberate around the world, it's fitting that this mission then be undertaken during Black History Month, and just weeks after our President's historic inauguration. And on behalf of President Obama, I want to express his gratitude for you doing this and for your service as well.

You know, Dr. King's trip to India stands as a landmark of the Civil Rights Movement and a real testament, ambassador, to the bonds of affection and shared history between our two nations. I want to thank the Government of India for welcoming and supporting our delegation, a reflection that India also understands that the deep and broad partnership our countries are forging is one based on common history and values. And it is because of that that it is destined to grow even stronger in the future. So I wish you Godspeed and a great deal of – oh, shall I say, jealousy that (laughter) – that you are retracing these footsteps.

And now I'd like to introduce some of my friends and those who will be making this journey, starting with Martin Luther King III, followed by Congressman Lewis and Congressman Bachus, if you would also like to say a few words, and ending up with Herbie Hancock.

Martin.

**MR. KING:** Thank you so much, Madame Secretary, and thank you, Congressman Lewis, Congressman Bachus, and of course, the great Mr. Herbie Hancock. I must also thank the Government of India and Ambassador Sen, for this is a very special journey for me personally, my wife and I, to retrace the steps that my parents engaged in 50 years ago. On behalf of everyone at Realizing the Dream, an organization I started, I am honored to be making this journey on this 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of that incredible visit.

In 1959, at the invitation of the Gandhi National Memorial Foundation, my parents, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. and Coretta Scott King, traveled to India to immerse themselves in Gandhi's

nonviolence movement, and to identify with and give support to the people of India who were struggling to overcome the evils of poverty and discrimination.

By working to foster peace through nonviolence, I hope this pilgrimage will inspire others to end the dependence on violence for nominal change, and instead look to reconciliatory power of nonviolence to create sustainable progress and diplomacy.

The impact that Gandhi's life had on my father was quite profound. And it is in that spirit that I set out on this journey in just a few days. Thank you. (Applause.)

**MR. LEWIS:** Madame Secretary and His Excellency Mr. Ambassador Sen, I would like to thank you, the United States Department of State, and the Government of India for all that you have done to support this delegation. It is with great pleasure and delight that I embark on this journey with Representative Bachus, my friend and my brother and my colleague from Alabama, co-leader of the delegation; other colleagues in the House; Martin Luther King III; Herbie Hancock and their delegation to pay tribute to the abiding link between Gandhi and Martin Luther King, Jr.

The two men were not politicians or lawmakers. They were not presidents or popes. But they were inspired human beings who believed deeply in the power of nonviolent resistance to injustice as a tool for social change. Because of their courage, commitment, and vision, this nation has witnessed a nonviolent revolution under the rule of law, a revolution of values and ideas that have changed America forever. We are all a beneficiary of this powerful legacy.

It is a great honor to retrace the steps of Gandhi and Martin Luther King, Jr. in India. Madame Secretary, I don't where I would be if it had not been for the teaching of Gandhi and Martin Luther King, Jr. We are looking forward to fulfilling an inspiring journey. Thank you, Madame Secretary, for all your help in making this possible. Thank you.

**SECRETARY CLINTON:** Thank you so much. (Applause.)

**MR. BACHUS:** I walked into my office this morning and there was music playing, and my staff was just ecstatic that Herbie Hancock – (laughter) – was – I would be traveling with Herbie Hancock, and they knew about Martin Luther King. And I first want to say that thank you for your father. I'm the congressman from Birmingham, Alabama. And Birmingham is a better place today than it was, because of Martin Luther King. As Congressman Lewis, when he called me and asked me to head this delegation, I was overwhelmed, because we in Birmingham, probably more than anywhere else, know about the ills of discrimination and racism.

I buried my father two years ago, and I'm proudest of him for crossing that color line and being the first contractor in Birmingham to hire subcontractors. He had vandalism of worksites, but he had the vast support of the people in Birmingham when he did that. And I want you to know that Birmingham is a better place. And I'm not sure there's any place more committed to equality than a place which suffered from inequality. And for that, I thank you and I thank your father. Thank you. (Applause.)

**MR. HANCOCK:** Madame Secretary, members of Congress, Mr. Ambassador, members of the Diplomatic Corps, Martin Luther King, Jr. – Martin Luther King III – and honored invited guests, it is a privilege for me to be here today among such esteemed company.

As chairman of the Thelonious Monk Institute of Jazz, I am honored to be traveling to India with my fellow musicians, singers Chaka Khan, Dee Dee Bridgewater, pianist George Duke, and young students who are studying with the Thelonious Monk Institute of Jazz performers in New Orleans. We are honored to be partnering with the State Department and to be taking this journey with Martin Luther King III, Congressman John Lewis, and other members of Congress. And we look forward to bringing music and jazz education to the people of India through this historic tour that celebrates the philosophies of Dr. King and Mahatma Gandhi, two very inspirational political and spiritual leaders whose teachings have really encouraged me to lead a life of peace, honesty, and filled with love for my fellow man.

And of great importance to me and my fellow artists, their philosophies of cooperation, communication, and harmony are also essential elements of every jazz band. (Laughter.) The Thelonious Monk Institute of Jazz has partnered with the State Department now for over 15 years, and this is our third trip to India. On the first trip I was humbled meeting Mother Teresa, as I have told you, Madame Secretary, and then filled with joy having several opportunities to contribute to the cultural fabric of the Indian people through performance and jazz education workshops.

We look forward to being a part of the Living Dream concerts in Mumbai and Delhi, and then working with the students who attend the Ravi Shankar Institute of the Performing Arts, where our students are going to be able to exchange valuable lessons with the young Indian musicians and prove again that the language of jazz knows no boundaries.

On behalf of the institute, all the musicians on the tour, and myself, I'd like to say a very, very warm and heartfelt thank you to our good friend and Secretary of State Hillary Clinton, and to the U.S. Department of State for continuing your support of culture, jazz, and music education throughout the world, and for giving us the opportunity to represent the United States and to be a part of this historic tour. Thank you. (Applause.)

**SECRETARY CLINTON:** Well, as you can tell, it's going to be quite a journey and all of us wish you well. I think it's important to really underscore the significance of this kind of cultural and historical diplomacy. It's exactly what the State Department should be doing even more of, reaching out and learning from as well as sharing with people around the world.

And it is also a reminder that nonviolence works. And if more people were able to understand that and remember the teachings of Gandhi and Dr. King, not only would the world, I think, be a more peaceful place, but I honestly believe that the injustice that persists would be far more likely to be remedied.

So it's a real pleasure during this Black History Month. I want to thank John Robinson and the Office of Civil Rights for what they do during this month, and this is part of that commemoration and celebration. And to all of you, it's a great reminder from the incomparable Herbie Hancock that jazz is not just about music. I think jazz is a pretty good guide to most things in life, and I can tell you, as Secretary of State, I'm improvising every single day. (Laughter.) Thank you all very much. (Applause.)

Those of you who would like to --

**QUESTION:** Madame Secretary --

**SECRETARY CLINTON:** Just a second. Those of you who would like to meet our guests, please come up, and before they have to leave, I know they'd like to say hello to some of our guests. So, please, come up.

**QUESTION:** Madame Secretary, do you believe that --

**SECRETARY CLINTON:** Thank you.

**QUESTION:** -- Dr. King's dream has come full circle now with President Obama's election, and also, if the change began with Mahatma Gandhi and Martin Luther King?

**SECRETARY CLINTON:** Well, I think President Obama would tell you that it is not about him. His election, his victory, is a victory for the American people as well as for his philosophy of change and his deep commitment to American values. There's still a lot of work to be done. I mean, the work of justice never ends. But we're very proud in the United States that our President represents, in great measure, the dream of Dr. King. And certainly, we all have to now continue that work, and I know that the President feels that responsibility acutely.

But it's not just the work of a president or not just the work of diplomats or members of Congress. It is the work of everyone, and that's why it's so important to have people like Martin and his nonprofit organization continuing that work, artists like Herbie and others of great talent continuing that work. So if anything, the philosophy and the examples of Gandhi and Dr. King should spur each and every one of us to even do more.

Thank you all very much. (Applause.)

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